

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 1, 2018

The Honorable Ralph DLG Torres
Governor
Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands
Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

Now that the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act has been signed into law, it is time to look ahead and build on this achievement. I am writing to ask for your official support.

On Thursday, I introduced the Northern Mariana Islands Workforce Stabilization Act, H.R. 6578. My legislation will give permanent status in the Marianas to the long-term workers, defined in the U.S. Workforce Act, and, after five years the option to become U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents. My legislation also provides permanent status for the E-2C investors originally admitted to the Marianas under our own Commonwealth immigration law.

The Workforce Stabilization Act recognizes that over the next ten years the number of CW, Commonwealth-Only Transitional Worker, permits will decline. Of course, those workers can be replaced by effective use of the training fund that CW employers pay into. And the new requirements in the U.S. Workforce Act, governing use of those funds, should help this effort.

But the Marianas also has a pool of some 2,350 CW workers, who have been contributing to our economy—and to our community—since 2015. These individuals by and large want to remain in the Marianas and want to continue adding value to our economy. The legislation I have now introduced will make that possible and, as a result, help stabilize our workforce, making the Marianas less dependent on foreign labor.

I have been working to achieve this goal of status for our long-term workers throughout my ten years in Congress. In 2011, my bill, H.R. 1466, won the approval of the House Natural Resources and Judiciary Committees, but was blocked from action by the House because of opposition from the Commonwealth government. Two years later, however, I included my text in the comprehensive immigration bill passed by the Senate on a vote of 68-32, though the House then failed to act.

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You yourself, in your role as Special Representative in Section 902 consultations with the Obama Administration, supported my position that we should make long-term workers in the Marianas eligible for permanent status.

Now, the Northern Mariana Islands Workforce Stabilization Act continues my pursuit of this goal. I ask you for your official and formal statement of support for my legislation and the policy goal it represents.

Although it is not likely that the current majority in the U.S. House of Representatives will take up a bill that leads to lawful permanent resident status for these long-term workers or for E-2C investors, I am hopeful that when the next Congress convenes in January 2019 the situation will change. In fact, both Rep. Raúl Grijalva, who would be Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, and Rep. Zoe Lofgren, who would chair the Subcommittee on Immigration, are co-sponsors of my bill.

With the support of these leaders and a new majority in the next Congress I believe we can pass the Northern Mariana Islands Workforce Stabilization Act and give our long-term workers and investors the permanent status they have earned.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Victor B. Hocog, Lt. Governor